






Children's Oral Health



A smile can say a lot about a child. It can tell us that a child is happy. It can also tell us whether that child is happy and healthy. Caring for children's teeth while they are young is essential for their overall growth and development. A recent California survey found that by the time children enter kindergarten more than 50 percent already have dental decay.

Accomplishments to Date: Keeping Smiles Healthy

-  Children's oral health is a top priority at First 5 California. Through First 5, more young children are having their oral health needs addressed by a wide variety of dental professionals throughout the state.
-  At the three-quarters point of this four-year project, "First Smiles" has provided more than 117,000 services for about 25,000 young children.
-  More information on the "First Smiles" project and its online training and provider and consumer resources are accessible through the First 5 California oral health Web site (www.first5oralhealth.org), which averages approximately 10,000 visitors each month.



First 5 California has invested \$10 million over four years in their Oral Health Initiative to improve the oral health of children ages 0 to 5. The initiative's main component is the First 5 California Oral Health Education and Training Project.

-  Known as "First Smiles," this project began in 2004 and works with 40,000 dental and medical professionals across the state to improve the prevention, detection and treatment of dental disease in young children.
-  It also provides training to allied health and child development professionals working with young children and their parents to promote oral health and increase their understanding of ways to prevent tooth decay.

"They put crowns in all of his mouth, except for six teeth on the bottom of his mouth. They removed a molar and a tooth in the front of his mouth, which were infected. Now I am happy that he can eat and sleep without pain."

*– Gloria Cobian, Highlands, CA,
whose five-year-old received
treatment through "First Smiles"*